

# Washington's charter school chaos grabs national headlines

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**Reaction to the state Supreme Court's Friday decision striking down the state's charter school law in its entirety ranged from outrage to glee from national education observers.**

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The state Supreme Court's shocking charter-school decision has reignited national passions on both sides of a contentious educational debate.

Publications such as the [New York Times](#), the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal have provided detailed coverage of the decision – and some strident commentary.

[“A grim surprise,” the Journal’s editorial page declared.](#) “Welcome back to the public school monopoly, kids. The 6-3 ruling is as politically driven as it is overreaching and legally flawed.”

Issued on the eve of Labor Day weekend, the court's ruling said Washington's charters are illegal because they are overseen by appointed rather than elected boards. That means the schools can't receive state taxpayer dollars, the court concluded.

In a commentary published by the conservative [National Review magazine](#), education author Frederick Hess fumed that the ruling was “gutless” and “bizarre.”

“After 25 years of charter school laws, and with 7,000 charter schools in more than 40 states, charter schooling has been deemed legal in every state where the question has arisen,” Hess wrote.

Except Washington.

Opponents of charters, who view them as a threat to traditional public schools, were ecstatic.

“This ruling gives hope to parents all across America, who see charter schools draining funding from their public schools, favoring the privileges of the few over the rights of the many,” [wrote Diane Ravitch](#), an education historian at New York University whose blog has a large national following.

The ruling has created chaos for Washington’s nine charter schools, which are scrambling to determine what it will mean for the 1,200 students who had planned to attend them this year.

This was supposed to be the charters’ inaugural year in Washington State, where voters voted to approve them in a 2012 ballot initiative that made Washington one of the last of the 42 states in the nation to allow charter schools.

Left in the lurch by the court, the schools are now hoping that a state advocacy group can fulfill its pledge to raise \$14 million from private donors in order to keep their doors open this school year.

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